

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 121 Ex.]

YEAS—81

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Barrasso	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Romney
Blunt	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Booker	Inhofe	Rounds
Brown	Johnson	Sanders
Burr	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shelby
Carper	Lankford	Sinema
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Cassidy	Lujan	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Sullivan
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cornyn	Marshall	Thune
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Toomey
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Moran	Warner
Ernst	Murkowski	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Fischer	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wicker
Graham	Padilla	Wyden
Grassley	Paul	Young

NAYS—17

Blackburn	Daines	Rubio
Boozman	Hagerty	Sasse
Braun	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono	Lummis
--------	--------

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 29, Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Charles E. Schumer, Chris Van Hollen, Michael F. Bennet, Jack Reed, Tammy Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Richard Blumenthal, Patrick J. Leahy, Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith, Brian Schatz, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 122 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Baldwin	Grassley	Portman
Barrasso	Hagerty	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Romney
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Booker	Hoeven	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Brown	Johnson	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cassidy	Lankford	Sinema
Collins	Leahy	Smith
Coons	Lee	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lujan	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	Markey	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Cruz	Menendez	Tuberville
Daines	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Moran	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Ernst	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Fischer	Ossoff	Wicker
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Graham	Paul	Young
	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono	Lummis
--------	--------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 98, the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATION OF KATHERINE C. TAI

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I am delighted to rise today in full support of Katherine Tai, President Biden's nominee to be our next U.S. Trade Representative.

As my colleagues are well aware, trade is an issue that impacts every corner of our country and, indeed, every corner of our globe. Roughly 75 percent—listen to this—75 percent of the world's purchasing power and over 95 percent of the world's consumers lie outside of our country's borders. If the United States is going to continue to be successful, we need to be able to tap into those markets and expand trading opportunities while ensuring a level playing field for American businesses and, I might say, for American consumers as well.

In Delaware, the First State, and throughout our Nation, trade policies affect how American businesses, both large and small—be they financial services, tech companies, workers, farmers, manufacturers—can compete in the global economy. But thanks to President Trump's haphazard trade wars over the last 4 years, American farmers, manufacturers, producers, and consumers too often have been left hanging in the balance—a situation that has been exasperated by this pandemic.

Now more than ever, all of them are in need of greater certainty and predictability. For the last 30, 40 years that I have served as Delaware's Treasurer, Congressman, Governor, and Senator, when I ask businesses what they want or need, more often than not, they say "certainty and predictability." For the last 4 years, we have had too little of both.

Instead of the chaotic approach of the last 4 years, we need strategic and thoughtful trade policies. That is why President Biden has nominated Katherine Tai, an experienced public servant and trade expert, to serve as our Nation's top trade official. Katherine will be a steady hand at the U.S. Trade Rep's Office, and as a key member of the Biden administration, she will make sure that our trade policies benefit all Americans and leave no one behind. She will work hard to help jumpstart our economy and ensure that American goods and services can reach international markets and that we can compete on a level playing field.

Katherine comes to this role with an exceptional breadth and depth of relevant trade expertise. She has earned a remarkable reputation as an expert in her field and is a leader who is respected by Democrats and Republicans alike in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives.

In her previous role, Katherine was chief trade counsel for the House Ways and Means Committee. There, she was a lead negotiator on the USMCA, U.S.-Mexico-Canada-America Trade Agreement, which notably passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support, in no small part because of her efforts.

Members of my own staff are grateful for the opportunity to work with Katherine to secure historically strong environmental provisions, including new monitoring and enforcement tools in the USMCA, which will help make sure

that alleged environmental violations will be investigated and remedied in a timely manner. These new tools and resources will help ensure that environmental protections are not just words on a piece of paper but policies that will actually be put into practice and consistently maintained well into the future.

As chairman of both the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, I look forward to working with my colleagues and with Katherine Tai and her team to build on the progress that was made in the USMCA.

Another immense trade challenge that we face now is to effectively counter China's unfair trade practices and its expanding influence in international trade. Since joining the World Trade Organization, the WTO, in 2001, China has proven to be a bad actor time and again. I believe that, working with our allies in the Pacific Rim in a spirit similar to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we can more effectively ensure that China adheres to its trade commitments with us and with the rest of the world.

Katherine has the expertise to help make that happen. Her prior experience as U.S. Trade Rep's Chief Counsel for China Trade Enforcement, where she led efforts to hold China accountable at the WTO for its unfair trade practices, is going to prove to be a tremendous asset for our Nation.

We would be lucky to have Katherine Tai, a committed public servant, represent our Nation on the world stage. As a daughter of immigrants and the first woman of color to be nominated to serve as U.S. Trade Rep, Katherine often cites her parents, also both public servants, as her inspiration.

In her testimony to the Finance Committee that I serve on, Katherine said—I want to quote her. Here is what she said. Speaking of her parents, she said:

I am proud of their service to the nation that welcomed them. And I am proud to live in a country where, in just one generation, their daughter could grow up to represent the United States and our interests around the globe.

Those are her words.

I, too, am proud to serve in a country where this is possible.

Simply put, Katherine has decades of experience in trade, years of experience working in trade in a bipartisan fashion, and a keen understanding of the role Congress can play alongside the administration to implement successful trade policies.

As the world grapples with the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, it is more important now than ever to have a leader at the U.S. Trade Rep's Office who will work with Congress to advance a trade agenda that uplifts American workers in every corner of our country, spurs domestic manufacturing, and improves environmental and labor standards throughout the world.

Given Katherine's track record and many years of experience working across the aisle in Congress, I am confident that she has the broad support necessary to be a highly skilled and effective U.S. Trade Representative as she takes on the many trade challenges that we face, and I invite my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Katherine Tai to serve as our next Trade Representative.

If I could, do I have a few more minutes to speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. You do.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, my legislative director is a woman named Xiao. Lucy is her first name, Lucy Xiao. She said to me several months ago, after the election—Joe Biden was elected—she said: You know, we were working on the USMCA last year. We worked with a woman who was a very senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee staff to help make sure the environmental provisions in the law are not only strong but enforceable.

She said: The woman we worked with is a top staff person on the House Ways and Means Committee. Her name is Katherine Tai.

Lucy said to me: I think that Katherine Tai might make a good U.S. Trade Rep and may make a very interesting human story as well.

I have huge respect for Lucy's judgment, and I turned around and I called on the phone the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, an old colleague from my days in the House, RICHARD NEAL.

I said: RICHARD, does the name "Katherine Tai" mean anything to you?

He said: Oh, yes. She is a great member of my staff.

I said: She has been suggested as someone who might serve as the U.S. Trade Rep. What do you think?

He said: She would be excellent. She would be excellent.

The next call I made was to Ted Kaufman, former U.S. Senator, former chief of staff to Joe Biden for many years, and the interim Senator in this body for 2 years after Joe was elected Vice President. I called former Senator Kaufman, who was in charge of the transition for the Biden team, and I said: Ted, I think I have a good name for Trade Rep.

I explained who Katherine Tai was and her history and her work experience and what Chairman RICHARD NEAL said about her.

I said: She might be a keeper.

A week later, he called me and he said: We are getting all kinds of great comments about Katherine Tai.

He said: You know, I think you don't always have the best judgment, Tom CARPER, but I think in this case, maybe you are like a blind squirrel that occasionally finds a nugget.

And I think maybe in this case, I have, with the strong support and help of Lucy.

So that is the story. That is my Katherine Tai story. She is a keeper,

and we are lucky to have her. She will succeed if confirmed. She will succeed Robert Lighthizer and Michael Froman, our immediate past two Trade Reps. Those are big shoes to fill, but she is very well prepared to fill them.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, the Senate is considering the nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Without question, the Senate should reject this nomination.

In the midst of this pandemic, America deserves a Health Secretary who is solely—solely focused on getting shots in arms, getting kids back to school, and getting parents back to work. But that is not Mr. Becerra.

Over his long career in politics, his primary passion has been ramming through a radical, far-left agenda and using the power of his office to persecute his political enemies.

Mr. Becerra would be in charge of administering the Nation's health programs, but he has virtually no experience or expertise in healthcare. His only experience responding to the pandemic, as far as I can tell, has been his enforcement of California's excessive and traumatizing lockdowns over the last year.

Mr. Becerra has been California's top cop, overseeing the most draconian and unconstitutional series of lockdowns anywhere in our country. He has shuttered churches while liquor stores and marijuana dispensaries remain open. He has destroyed small, family-owned businesses while enriching massive corporations.

In the false name of public health, he has rigorously enforced unscientific and unproductive measures that have ruined the lives of Californians. Today, California's unemployment rate stands at 9 percent—45 percent higher than the national average, nearly two times higher than our unemployment rate in Arkansas. That is the result of bad policy. And jobless Californians have Xavier Becerra and Gavin Newsom to thank for their struggles.

If Mr. Becerra's record as attorney general is any indication, every American should be alarmed by how this nominee would fight the pandemic—not with science, compassion, or common sense but with crushing political force. Few Americans believe that California's lockdown commissar deserves a promotion. Unfortunately, the Senate may just give him one.

Mr. Becerra is also a vocal advocate for the socialist takeover of healthcare